

# The Ryder Cup

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Whistling Straits

## Collin Morikawa

Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Good morning, and welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup. We are here with Collin Morikawa. Welcome to your first Ryder Cup of your career. What does this U.S. Team roster, which you're part of, six rookies, eight 20-somethings and you meet both of those dynamics, what does it say about the present state of American golf and its future?

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Diversity. I think we talk about that not just in golf but around the world right now, especially in the U.S., and it shows that golf is meant for a lot of people. It's meant for a lot of different people, and anyone that has a chance, they can get a chance to make it here.

To have six rookies, I think that's a lot, but we have six veterans and we have six guys. Even though we're a fairly young team, we've got a lot of guys that just have had experience in golf in general. Obviously the Ryder Cup is a whole different kind of beast of itself, but I think we're all meant for this stage, and we look forward to it.

**Q. As someone who's watched this from the outside looking in, is it kind of puzzling what the U.S. fortunes have been in this event? And having all these new faces and fresh blood, how excited are you to try and turn that around?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** We're really excited. Yeah, it is puzzling how I think we've lost a lot in the handful of years looking back at the past. But that's the past. We're here and we're about the present or hopefully what the future is going to be like.

It's about this week, and hopefully we can turn that around and kind of turn that tide in our favor for however many years I'm able to play this. But yeah, what's happened in the past, I couldn't have had any control of that. I was whatever years old, and I think as time goes on, we learn. You learn and you improve, and just looking at the way the captains are going this week, I don't know exactly what it was like say 10 years ago, but they're doing everything that I would want to see in a captain.

So it's awesome to see and be a part of that team.

**Q. You're usually pretty stone-faced out on the golf course. I think the most I've seen from you is like a little fist pump. I didn't watch you at the Walker Cup, but do you think this week we're going to see a little more maybe a side of you that maybe we haven't really seen on the golf course?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, I think that's what the Ryder Cup brings out of some people. You're still going to see -- you're not going to see me as energetic as some because I want to get the job done, but yeah, there's going to be emotion.

But it's about leveling out that emotion, right, having that emotion after a made putt or one hole and then going back to the next tee shot and realizing that that was the last hole. You've got to worry about this next hole, kind of this mini-match.

Yeah, I think I'm pretty good at balancing that out, and hopefully we'll see a lot of fist pumps out there.

**Q. A lot of guys have come in here and talked about how they have learned things about other guys because they kind of let their hair down, things you don't usually do at a normal tournament. What have you learned about any of your teammates this week?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** They're all amazing guys, and they're really smart. I mean, I just chimed in on a -- I wasn't even talking, I was listening to a conversation with Jordan and Bryson last night at our dinner, and the things they were talking about are things that I've never talked about with my friends or other golfers I even play with.

Just say in college, it's crazy the level of knowledge these guys have for the game because they love it so much and they're interested, and that's what I love to do, and I just kind of peeked my ear in and kind of figure out what they're talking about.

But they love it so much, and I think looking at the veterans and looking at the ones that have lost a Ryder Cup



already, they just want to win. At the end of the week it doesn't matter if you've won zero points or you've won five; if your team wins, that's the best feeling in the world.

I think that's the way a lot of guys have to look at it. That's how I looked at the Walker Cup I played, the Palmer Cups I've played. Thankfully I've been on the right side of those, so hopefully I can just keep it that way.

**Q. Can you just give us the gist or the topic that Jordan and Bryson were talking about?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** They were just talking about wedges.

**Q. Is there anything exciting about a wedge discussion?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Trust me, it was a very interesting conversation.

**Q. Just curious, I'm sure as a golf fan you've got certain television memories growing up of Tiger making the putt at Torrey or -- do you have any Ryder Cup highlight, television memories burned into your skull?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** I wouldn't say burned in. That's me. I think we've gone through this question a bunch of like majors, what's your favorite history on this and that. To be honest, like it just kind of goes through me. I'd rather be playing. Watching the Ryder Cup, obviously you watch it every year with your family and friends and whatnot, but to be honest, like I'd much rather be playing, so I'm happier to be in this moment, to be on this stage.

So let's make some memories this week.

**Q. Along those lines, you've known you've been on the team longer than most guys and I'm sure you've kind of thought about what it's going to be like this week. Has anything happened this week, golf course, team room, whatever, that you weren't expecting?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Not really. You know, I think some of the times when you're with the entire team, those are the best moments. I mean, just riding on a bus yesterday with half the guys to dinner is like some of the best stories you're ever going to hear, and I think those are the memories that you kind of take with you.

All the clothes, all the fans, everything, you kind of know what you're going to expect, but you just don't know what kind of stories you're going to hear. Those are some of the best things that you're going to remember for the rest of

your life.

**Q. Who is the best storyteller, and are you one of them?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** No, I'm definitely not one of them. I'm 24 and I have maybe like a fraction if not zero of the stories say Phil Mickelson has. Phil obviously is a great storyteller. I don't know if he's telling the truth at this point. You get to a certain age and you kind of just -- you make stuff up, and I have a hard time believing some of the stuff I heard, but it is what it is.

**Q. It's entertaining.**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** It is what it is.

**Q. A few years ago I watched your graduation on YouTube. It was just as exciting as most graduation ceremonies, but it wasn't that long ago. Congratulations.**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Thank you.

**Q. As you were coming here, it's really not that long ago and you've got two majors and you're already in this as a shoe-in candidate. Were you astounded at all at how far it's come so fast for you?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** No. I mean, look, where was the Ryder Cup -- or, you know, let's talk about the Olympics. I realize we're at the Ryder Cup. The Olympics were not on my radar at all when I graduated. I thought that was just something that was not attainable really unless I had done what I did.

I wasn't thinking like it wasn't possible, but for me that first summer was to get my card. How do I get my card, whether it's the Korn Ferry finals or whether I win or earn enough points to get my card. So there's been goals that I've set, obviously very high goals, but still achievable, and there's goals out there that I put to my standard that I think that I can reach that maybe other guys don't. But that's for me to know and for me to believe.

But knowing that this Ryder Cup was -- after I won and then you win a major and you play well in 2020, yeah, this was obviously a goal. I think you have to adjust your goals as time goes on, and maybe the Ryder Cup wasn't on my radar when I graduated, but it soon was on the radar.

That Presidents Cup that I missed in '19 quickly was on my radar because I had put my name out there. I had played well and had to play better, but missing that team, not that I had a great chance to make that team, but just missing that

team kind of just pushed me to like -- I want to be on these team events, and these team events are just so memorable that you don't really want to miss any.

**Q. When was your first conversation with Steve Stricker about the Ryder Cup team? Do you remember that?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, so we had talked maybe a few weeks before the PGA at Harding, and I knew I wanted to play a practice round with him. I had never got to meet him actually. We scheduled a practice round that week at Harding, and obviously he was a good luck charm to kind of fuel a win.

**Q. You've reached that level now where if you have a couple so-so tournaments people are, what's going on, is he injured. How did you process a somewhat disappointing FedExCup Playoffs and how does the body and the game feel coming into this week?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, it was just bad timing. The biggest thing I learned from those three weeks was to never played injured. I think I've learned that. I'm never going to do that again, no matter what it is.

It built bad habits into my golf swing. By the time the Playoffs had started at Liberty I thought my back was feeling good, but I had just built in some really bad swing patterns, and that's what happens when you play with an injury.

Those three weeks I was just trying to figure out how do I hit it better because that's a big part of my game, trusting, knowing where the golf ball is going to go. So those three weeks were just trying to figure out how do I hit my cut, how do I aim left, hit it right, and I finally figured it out right after the Playoffs. Obviously some really bad timing, but it's going to happen. You're going to play bad, and that's golf.

It feels good. I was talking with Xander yesterday, and he looked at me, and he's like, You're back, and I was like, Yeah, I'm back. The cuts are back, and it's a good time to have that shot.

**Q. Are you 100 percent healthy?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** I'm 100 percent healthy. Knock on wood right now, but I'm feeling great.

**Q. Can I ask you to expand on your very first answer when you talked about diversity in the team and in what sense you meant that, internally the team and also in the image that this team gives out to the sport**

**in representing your nation.**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, let's see, when you look at us on TV, we're all pretty much the same. We're all just hitting the golf ball, moving it forward, playing 18 holes. But everyone on this team has their own character, and to finally get to know -- I know pretty much everyone on this team already, but to get to know them a little bit better and see their character pull out of them when you're in the team rooms when you're hanging out and having dinner, that's what's fun.

That's when you get to see what everyone is like, and everyone is awesome. It's such a good 12-man team that they're just fun to be around, that it just makes the week a little bit different than what you normally see. We're not talking like this and hanging out on a regular week. Our TOUR events, you go and do your business and get out. It's a lot different feeling when you're off the golf course, when you're hanging out and it's just that much more enjoyable, I think, and it brings the team together.

**Q. Compare your feelings when you first went to Sandwich and saw that course, which obviously fitted your eye and you played really well. When you see here, how do you feel, comparisons or differences or...**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, I feel comfortable. A lot of the par-3s I feel great on. A lot of the iron shots I feel good. That's my strength. You know, put it in the fairway, and the rough is not crazy long out here, so yeah, that might help a couple guys. But there's still some long grass. Some of these bunkers are really penalizing and you've got to hit good shots. We know birdies are going to win a lot of holes and pars are going to be good in some aspects of the format.

I'm feeling really good right now.

**Q. Was there a specific instance where you hurt your back in Japan or was it just sort of cumulative? And can you also say when did it feel fine and it was just a matter of bad habits that were impacting you?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, it was actually the first round on 14 right before our first delay. I mean, really early on in the Olympics, and that was -- I think that's what's great about when you play for a team is it just pulled something out of me to just grind it out for that week.

And then as you go on to Memphis, so that week was when it really happened. Then I felt fine going right into Playoffs. I hadn't touched a club because I had to make sure my body was all feeling good, but going into Playoffs that first week my body felt fine, so that was good.

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The swing looked awful and the ball flights were going everywhere, and it's not -- it didn't help that I wasn't making any putts or chipping well. So it was just kind of a combination of everything. Bad habits crept in, and sometimes it takes a day to get out bad habits, and sometimes like what happened took three weeks.

It's such unfortunate timing with the way -- how I played throughout the regular season. I don't even think I played that great. It was kind of a mediocre season even with the wins I had. I think the consistency wasn't there with what I wanted, and what I probably said after last year's TOUR Championship and what I wanted to do this season.

It was really bad timing, but I'm glad I'm healthy now. I'm glad the body and the swing is back because I can just go out, especially with an atmosphere like this, you can just go out and hit your shot.

**Q. Was it lower back or --**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, it was just a muscle. It was a muscle, so it was just -- yeah, I tried hitting out of this kind of really sticky rough in Japan, and yeah, I've got to get stronger.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thanks for stopping in. Have a great day and a great stay here in Wisconsin.

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